

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 23, 1911, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. HOTEL CHELSEA, Atlantic City, N. J. June 23, 1911. (Not blamketty, blanketty, blank!) My darling Alec:

Many thanks for a very interesting communication. — I can hardly call it letter — for that strikes a more intimate personal note, received this morning. If all the Records were made up of as interesting material as you have sent me lately you would not have to complain of the lack of appreciation shown to past issues. But I have always felt that you made a mistake in spending so much time and money in trivial details of no special interest to any but the writers thereof. Of course Davidson would preserve the issues carefully, there were so many of his own productions therein and he is a man that likes to hear himself.

I wish you would try and see if you can't make some arrangement with a printing office to print your papers in uniform size. I don't believe that it would cost you much more to print say fifty copies of your own articles than the eighteen of the Recorder. I think your ice experiments fascinating, but are they now? Surely other people working with refrigerators and ice-making machines have found out about the effect of salt water on the thermometer. I would be thankful to have you tackle Davidson on the fly manufactory he is running. I have thought of it myself, but he needs a man to deal with him. It's all very well to provide screens and locks, but it is always the man behind the wheel or gun that counts, you have got to see that the servants hate flies as you do, and appreciate the importance of keeping them out. I have had fly proof covers on the swill barrel and locks on the doors, but what's the use of covers if they are not kept over or of locks and springs if the maids fasten back the doors.

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You do not speak of the house-boat telephone, but Mr. Byrnes writes me that you found it of use at least once already. I just had to have it put up because I could no longer stand having you so absolutely alone, miles from any help. By putting a telephone but no bell, you are as absolutely out of reach of any one as ever, yet every one is within your reach if you need help.

I went over the Bellair Heights problem very carefully. The one flaw in your reasoning is that it takes fifteen years to get to the twenty thousand dollars, whereas it might take only ten years to reach the fifty thousand. The stocks may be sure, but they are certainly slow, the land may be uncertain, the risk of failure great, but also the rewards may be very great.

(Rest of letters are figures regarding lots, etc.)

Much love, Mabel.